

The Man of the Good Heart

"If I were an artist," said Father Simard as we stood on the steps of the Cathedral at St. Albert, "if I were an artist I should like to paint all that,"

He meant the soft, green countryside, the old buildings, the poplar trees and the solitary elm shading a corner of the yard. He meant more, too. He was thinking of the past, and all that St. Albert had meant in the making of the Canadian West. Possibly more than anything he was thinking about Father Lacombe.

For Father Lacombe built the first church at St. Albert ~~in 1869~~ and even today the whole place seems dominated by the spirit of this great peacemaker of the plains. Everywhere at St. Albert the spirit of charity and ~~and~~ interest in mankind is evident--at the Indian school, the old folk's home.....in the long service of the priests and the Grey Nuns.

Even Father Lacombe's old church has its place, for it's a museum now, carrying on the heroic traditions of its builder. In this museum which contains so many relics of the past, Father Simard showed me the hand-forged plough share with which, despite many discouraging remarks, an early St. Albert Priest grew wheat taller than a man. The blacksmith priest who forged the plough share was noted for his strength. He was not a large man and when, one day, a stranger came to the blacksmith shop and asked: "Where does the blacksmith live?" the priest picked up the anvil and pointing with it to a house some distance away said: "He lives over there."

Father Simard showed me a belt and a few other tokens, all that remained of a priest who was eaten by the wolves.

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"Where did you get that fur?" Who gave you the right to wear it?" For a moment Father Lacombe was stunned, then he tore off the fur and threw it in Rowand's face..

The incident, of course, ~~became~~ became a humorous anecdote, and in later years Father Lacombe was fond of telling about the generosity and courage of John Rowand.

But most of Father Lacombe's time was spent among the Indians. He constantly travelled a huge territory, baptising, and nursing the Indians through epidemics. He also learned the Cree tongue and became so proficient that he expanded his knowledge into a Cree dictionary..

When he finally established the St. Albert mission in 1861 he straightaway proved that he was a builder as well as a missionary.. The ^{Northern} Sturgeon river was a serious obstacle in high water, and Father Lacombe decided to build the first bridge west of the Great Lakes.. He finally won the help of the Indians and the few white men by telling them that only those who helped build should use the bridge.. When the bridge was ^{completed} ~~finally built~~ it seemed like a miracle. The Indians crossed it time after time, just for the thrill. ~~The Indians~~ sometimes even camped on the bridge, and ~~the~~ story goes that one brave built a fire right in the middle. After that the Indians had to camp on the shore.

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andxxxxxxcxmntedxxzxboutzizixnzixzdzixyxzx~~

It was as a peacemaker that Father Lacombe was best known, and at one time his desire for peace nearly cost him his life..

In 1865 Father Lacombe received a mission dear to his heart: that of following the Indian tribes wherever they should go,

helping them and converting them when he could.. His quest took him into the camp of Chief Natous of the Blackfeet.. The Blackfeet, while slow to embrace the Christian faith, had a deep affection for Father Lacombe. He had once nursed them through a terrible epidemic of the ~~Scarlet Fever~~ ^{typhoid}.

It was a dark December night and the priest was resting in the Chief's tent when suddenly an Indian somewhere in the darkness shouted: "Assinaw! Assinaw! The Crees! The Crees!" Once again the age-old battle between the Crees and the Blackfeet had broken out..

The small camp with which Father Lacombe was sojourning was one of three Blackfeet camps. The other two camps, however, were a long way off, and help could not be expected for at least a few hours.. The bullets were whizzing everywhere, piercing all the tepees, and especially the largest one, where the priest was staying..

The old chief rushed out to exhort the Blackfeet to sell their lives as dearly as possible. In the darkness his voice was lost in the gunfire, the barking of dogs, the whoops of the Crees and the wailing of the women.

Father Lacombe calmly got up, put on his cassock, kissed his Oblate crucifix, took his holy oils and went out ~~zazkzxyz~~ ~~znyxzxzxkzxyzkz~~ into the battle. He called to the Crees to withdraw, but his voice was ^{unheard} ~~znzixzxyzkz~~ in the terrific noise. He finally gave up and ~~diverted~~ his attention to baptizing any of the dying who wanted his ministrations.

The first victim was a young Blackfoot woman who had been shot in the head. She asked Father Lacombe to baptize her before she died.. Father Lacombe baptized her and a few minutes later she was scalped by a Cree, and her baby, whom the priest had

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overlooked in the darkness, was killed.

All night the battle went on, and toward dawn the
braves of the distant Blackfeet camps, attracted by the firing,
arrived to re-enforce their people. One of the new parties of
warriors
~~xxxxxxx~~ was led by a young brave ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ destined to
become the greatest chief among ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ the Blackfeet.
In the darkness he was stopped by Father Lacombe.

"Who are you?" asked the priest.

"Crowfoot," replied the Indian.

Father Lacombe had heard of this young man already known
for his wisdom and bravery. He urged him to do what he could to
save his people.

When dawn broke, twenty-five lodges had been destroyed
by the Crees. In the cold December light Father Lacombe took
his crucifix in one hand ~~xxx~~, his Red Cross flag in the other
and told his Blackfoot friends to cease firing. Then, holding
his crucifix above his head, and waving his flag he calmly
walked toward the enemy.

As he walked he called to the Crees, but they did not hear,
and a heavy mist prevented them from seeing him. The Crees
kept firing, too. ~~xxxxxx~~ As Father Lacombe walked toward them
a bullet glanced from the frozen ground, struck ~~the priest~~ ^{him} on
the shoulder and ~~glancing~~ ^{again} off, struck him on the forehead.
Father Lacombe fell to the snow.

When they saw him fall a fresh wave of anger and courage
swept over the Blackfeet. Thinking that the Crees had killed
their friend they began to drive the enemy back. ~~xxxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Despite their new courage the battle continued
until, during a lull in the fighting a Blackfoot warrior
called out to the Crees: "You have ~~killed your friend~~ ^{wounded the priest!}!" The

~~next xxxxxxxx is that~~

injured
xxxxxx

When the Crees heard that they had killed Father Lacombe they hastily withdrew.

Spore

In the early 1880's the C. P. R. was rapidly being built across the plains from Winnipeg. When the railroad reached the Blackfoot reserve it began to be feared that the Indians would prevent the steel from going through. They had heard rumors that the coming of the railroad was but the first step in a final taking away of their reserve and such rights as they still maintained. They had heard, too, that the railroad meant the arrival of thousands of settlers who would make it impossible for the Indian to live.

The foremen of the construction crews knew that Father Lacombe would have a tremendous influence with the Indians. They ~~xxxxxx~~ asked ~~Father Lacombe~~ him to come and save the situation if he could.

The Priest lost no time. He came prepared to talk in the only language the Indian really understood.... food and plenty of it. Father Lacombe brought to Crowfoot's ~~xxxx~~ camp two hundred pounds of tea, plenty of sugar, flour and tobacco.

After the Indians had feasted, Father Lacombe made a speech. He urged that they let the railroad go through, and ^{toed them} that ~~xxxxxx~~ their property rights would be respected. There was considerable grumbling among the Indians, but through the friendship of Crowfoot, who asked that they respect the word of a man who had never lied to them, they let the construction go on.

An interesting aftermath of this service done by Father Lacombe

There is an interesting aftermath to this story of Father Lacombe as peacemaker for the C. P. R. In 1883 when the main line of the C. P. R. had reached Calgary, George Stephen, President of the road made a trip out with a distinguished party. Father Lacombe was invited to lunch aboard the president's car. During the luncheon Stephen remarked that it was pleasant to get away from the hurry and scurry of work.... out to the foothills.

" In fact, gentlemen, I am going to resign as president-- for one hour, and be plain every day George Stephen."

R. B. Angus, another of his guests, said: " Well, we can't let the road be without a president, even for one hour. I move that Father Lacombe take over in recognition of his services to us at Blackfoot Crossing."

Father Lacombe accepted the offer in the same spirit as it was made. A board meeting was held then and there. Stephen tendered his resignation and Father Lacombe was elected. The priest, always full of good humor, then nominated Stephen to fulfill ~~his certain~~ certain religious duties. When the hour was up another meeting was held and Stephen again shouldered the burdens of his office.

Father Lacombe performed in 1885 an even greater service than that which he did the railroad.

It was ^{on} March 27th that rumors began to spread through ~~the~~ the small settlement of Calgary. The rumors told a grim story--of uprisings among the Saskatchewan Crees and Metis...of murder and pillage. Calgary was far away from the scene of such events, but the people were worried. It was known that agitators from the Cree and Metis camps had been working among the Blackfeet, and it was feared that if the Blackfoot

bits of the skulls of Fathers Fafard and Marchand, who died at Frog Lake; and in a corner of the Oblate plot in the cemetery we found the graves of the martyr priests.

On the slope below the Cathedral stands the bronze statue of Father Lacombe himself, looking out over the broad lands where he worked so long and so well..

There are thousands of tales about Father Lacombe

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nation should join Reil they might easily wipe out all white settlement in the ~~xxxxxx~~ region.

It was an exciting day in the history of Calgary. A Home Guard was organized. A wire was sent to Ottawa and Regina for arms. A watch was set. Men gathered on the streets and spoke gravely of a Blackfoot ~~amxkzuzxz~~ attack on the town. Father Lacombe was sent for, and though he expressed faith in his friend, Crowfoot, he could not quiet the fears of the Calgary people.

In the morning Father Lacombe borrowed an engine from the C. P. R. and headed for Blackfoot Crossing to see Crowfoot. Crowfoot was surprised to see the priest, and Father Lacombe pretended that his was only a casual visit. Crowfoot said that he had heard ~~xxxx~~ the Metis and Crees were killing all the whites, and Father Lacombe convinced him that this was entirely false.

The Blackfoot camp was assembled and the priest told the Indians that the white men were too strong....that it would be foolish to take up arms. Crowfoot too spoke to his people, and at length told Father Lacombe that the Blackfoot, at least, would remain at peace.

But it was an uneasy time, and according to tales told me by old-timers who well remember the '85 Rebellion, Crowfoot himself was not too sure that he could hold his Indians. The Calgary old-timer A. P. Patrick who was a close friend of the great Blackfoot chief told me that Crowfoot said to him one day, "Pack up a horse and get to the mountains. I'm don't know how long I can hold them. I'm not sure I can hold them at all."

~~But~~ He did hold them, and the Blackfoot caused no trouble, despite the fact that they were the most warlike of all the western Indians.

Contest - check mss.

Letter

Johnny Dunn.

Call Elton - cpa

Call Mr. Brice

Book work to be finished by Friday.

Revision

Bonff?

Col. ~~gory~~ Paddy Niles

Tell tales completed

General Editorial:

Common revision?.

Creative

Father to come

{ Pearl River Finished

{ John Woe

WJ

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In 1886 Sir John A. McDonald invited ~~Crowfoot~~ Father Lacombe to come East with Crowfoot and other chiefs who had remained loyal during the Rebellion. This was partly a gesture of appreciation, and partly a wish to impress these Indians with the might of the white man.

Whatever the motive, the tour was a triumph. The Indian chiefs were ~~fixed and entertained~~ everywhere feted and entertained. They were not comfortable in the white man's civilization, however, and were most unwilling to let their great protector, Father Lacombe, out of their sight. Magnificent suited of rooms were provided for the Chiefs at the hotels, but they refused to use them. They preferred to sleep in a single room, and insisted that the priest sleep there too.

Crowfoot especially made a profound impression upon the Canadian public. Not only was he a heroic figure in appearance, but his public utterances were also magnificent. At one time the chiefs were offered a huge pile of guns and ammunition to take back west. ~~xxxxxxx~~. Crowfoot replied that the gift would not be accepted. The Indians came in peace.....they had not even a small knife for protection. They would accept no guns.

It would be impossible to tell all of Father Lacombe's good deeds, because no man knows all the good he did. ~~Wherever~~ *Wherever he was needed,* ~~he was needed xxx~~ *He went* no matter how cold the weather, ~~or what~~ *how weak* his own physical condition, ~~said to be~~. During the terrible smallpox epidemic of 1870-71 he bore winged feet. He was heard from at Edmonton, then at Pitt and Carleton. He was everywhere, tending the sick, baptizing the dying. His service to the Indians was rewarded as a missionary priest would like to be rewarded. Convinced that a man who could live

questions:

Chapter Headings -

Don's section.

Little?

End 2 Pages
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ammunition

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Father Lacombe was a man of great faith and great courage, and ~~he~~ *he* ~~fored~~ *fored* ~~feorful~~ *feorful* ~~hardships,~~ *hardships,* ~~yet~~ *yet* he lightened his own hardships with a delightful sense of humor. On one hard, cold trip he ran out of food. Telling about the experience afterwards he said: "If we had had a pinch or two of salt, the moccasins wouldn't have made a bad meal at all!"

In the evidence of such spirit it is no wonder that Father Lacombe is a sacred memory in Alberta. It is no wonder that St. Albert stands as a monument to the work of his younger years, and that far away, at Midnapore near Calgary, stands a monument to the good deeds of his old age.

Father Lacombe is a sacred ^{tradition} ~~memory~~ in
Alberta. ~~There~~ There are two living shrines
to his memory - St. Albert and the Lacombe
Home at Midnapore, near Calgary. St.
Albert represents the work of his younger
years, while the Lacombe Home for the
aged represents the charitable ambition
of his last years. He raised the money
for the Home almost single handed.

Between St. Albert and Medicine
~~his year and of faithful work~~
 As long as there is faith in God, human
 courage and interest in mankind, Father Lacombe will be

among them in sickness and hard times, as Father Lacombe
had done for over twenty years, ~~but~~ ^{known 20 years} ~~AMMXX a messa~~ ~~power~~
power